

Peace News

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Spain: new facts of US military take-over plan

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No official denial of the authenticity of the document was ever issued in Britain. However, it was indicated "off the record" that it was, at least in large part, a forgery. We weren't in a position to disprove that, so we let things slide for the time being. This week's story broke in Washington which throws a new light on the episode.

In the last two years, US forces in Spain have carried out two joint training exercises in which they played the role of suppressors of a domestic rebellion. This was revealed when two Senate investigators paid a trip to Spain this spring.

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The "scenario" of the exercises—Pathfinder I and II—was that troops from "Samland", acting under a "security treaty" with the host country, put down a staged rebellion.

That "security treaty" sounds remarkably like USINCEUR OPLAN NR 100-1/U—even though the US authorities have, naturally, hurriedly announced that no such "security treaty" as the Pathfinder scenarios call for, is in existence.

They might even be telling the truth. The provisions of the treaty from which we published extracts are so broad and nebulous, that any country's government would be reluctant to sign it, except in an acute emergency.

For example, it would permit the US forces to quell civil disturbances that may affect their "mission or security", even without the request of the native authorities.

"US forces may take such action as the US military commander deems necessary, either unilaterally or in co-operation with the government

(of...)"

The treaty would also give the US forces the right "to occupy any area or facility considered necessary for the accomplishment of their mission, or for their safety and continued security, as determined by US military commanders." (Emphasis added.)

No nation would be likely to sign such a treaty except in a dire emergency. But US commanders would have a draft ready for signing just in case. And field exercises to test out such a plan would make sense now and again.

CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP EMERGES IN USSR

"We in the West should remember with humility, even with shame, that the first significant crack in the Cold War front was made not by those who enjoy the formal freedom of the Western democracies, but by men who run the risk of being shot, imprisoned, driven to become nervous caricatures of human beings."

Wright Mills on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

Roger Barnard writes: To condemn people by categories, or to punish them on account of their convictions, is subversive of the capacity of society—any society—to exist.

It is subversion that goes deeper than all efforts to supplant one government by another, for it undermines people's confidence in their capacity to associate and identify with each other

regardless of social, political, or economic differences.

This is the vast evil represented by the increasing repression of non-conformists and dissenters in the Soviet Union. However, the report in last Sunday's Observer that the civil rights movement in the Soviet Union has now assumed organised form, as an "Action Group for the Defence of Civil Rights in the USSR" is an indication of the other side of the coin.

Not all the power in this world rests with armies, or with those who build and preside over ideological structures designed for social control.

Led by historian Peter Yakir, the Action Group comprises 15 people, supported by about 40 others. It has

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JOHN KEOHANE comments on the Maud report A BUREAUCRAT'S DREAM

Most people think that local government is a boring adjunct of Westminster, whose main function it is to collect rates and to see that the dustbins are emptied regularly, as J. Sharpe once pointed out in a Fabian pamphlet.

Public contact with the town hall usually involves some kind of restriction or control, and this is probably part of the reason why less than half the people eligible to vote bother to at local elections.

Yet local authorities in this country employ nearly two million workers, and spend more than £2,700 million

annually. They supervise a complex network of welfare agencies, educate more than seven million children, and own and maintain about one fourth of the nation's homes.

Again, in many instances, decisions taken by local councils can have far more effect on people's day-to-day lives than those taken in parliament. A local MP, especially if he is a backbencher, has less potential influence for a constituent than a councillor, and a committee chairman can be far more useful to an elector than a junior minister of the Crown. The mass media is, of course,

obsessed with national politics at the expense of local government, which may also help to explain this strange disinterest of the electors.

Last week's Redcliffe-Maud report on local government reform clearly recognises these facts. It is astonishing, therefore, that their recommendations should contain proposals which can serve only to alienate people even further from participating more fully at local levels.

Broadly speaking, Maud recommends that local government in England be divided into three tiers of authority. The most powerful of these bodies

would be built around a geographic concept of "provinces." This council would decide the long-term planning and strategy within which the second tier, i.e. the regional council, would operate.

The provincial authority would co-operate with the government in the planning of the economic and social development of each province, and the regional councils would be responsible for raising revenue through rates, for settling priority of expenditure within the strategic

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